

Luann Harden Believes in Cornerstone Alliance

Luann Harden has been an investment partner with Cornerstone Alliance since 2013. Before that, Luann and her husband, Craig, owned a die cast manufacturing business in Benton Township. When they needed assistance relocating to the City of Benton Harbor, they worked with Cornerstone Alliance, and Berrien Economic Development to make it happen. Their business, Shore Line Industries, Inc., thrived in Southwest Michigan for more than 12 years, and in 2001 they were purchased by a first tier automotive supplier. According to Harden, being part of the Cornerstone Alliance investor group now allows her to give back.

"Entrepreneurship and manufacturing are the keys to economic growth," says Harden. "Our area has lost a significant amount of manufacturing in recent years. Our financial support of Cornerstone Alliance, as Berrien County's lead economic development organization, is allowing them to bring economic prosperity back to Michigan's **Great** Southwest. Growth brings employment, and employment allows residents to spend dollars locally."

Harden has since changed careers from entrepreneur, and is currently a regional director at Western Michigan University's Extended University Programs department, with oversight of its Southwest (Benton Harbor), Battle Creek and Lansing locations. She returned to college as a nontraditional student while working as a human resource professional and running her own art studio. Harden has obtained her B.A. in Art, an M.A. in Organizational Analysis, and is currently completing her Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership.

"Education plays an important role in helping employers find a talented workforce. A talented workforce can also attract new industry to the area," says Harden. "Western Michigan University plays an important role in economic development, participating in community initiatives, offering relevant training programs, and preparing tomorrow's workforce. When we increase the level of expertise through professional development and degree completion, we are also meeting the needs of existing and future employers."

"Supporting Cornerstone Alliance is strengthening our communities as they attract new business, help new employers succeed and support local entrepreneurial initiatives," explained Harden. "We all benefit from Cornerstone Alliance's efforts in making Southwest Michigan a GREAT place for our families to work, play and live."



Luann Harden
Regional Director,
Western Michigan University's
Extended University Programs

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